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LETTER DATED 14 MAY 1998 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter from His Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, addressed to you, and a copy of a statement by the Council of Ministers of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia regarding the unprovoked and totally senseless violation of Ethiopian sovereignty carried out by the State of Eritrea on 12 May 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fesseha A. TESSEMA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

98-13463 (E) 150598

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Annex

Letter dated 14 May 1998 from the Prime Minister of Ethiopia addressed to the President of the Security Council

It is with a deep and excruciating sense of sadness that I wish to inform you of the unprovoked and totally senseless violation of Ethiopian sovereignty carried out by the State of Eritrea on 12 May 1998. On the date referred to, Eritrean troops moved into Ethiopian territory and, after attacking contingents of our Peoples' Militia and Police, occupied a few areas inside Ethiopia over which Eritrea has claims but concerning which there is understanding between Ethiopia and Eritrea that the issue should be settled through negotiations, a process which is already under way.

Our sub-region and Ethiopia and Eritrea, and their peoples, have had more than their share of suffering caused by war. This is the source of the anguish felt by Ethiopia over this sad incident.

Ethiopia feels that a speedy withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Ethiopian territory is a condition for arresting this situation and for seeking peaceful resolution of whatever disputes there are between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

While drawing your attention to this sad sicuation and enclosing herewith the statement issued on 13 May 1998 by the Council of Ministers of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on this turn of events, I wish to ask you to have the text of this message and its enclosure circulated as a document of the Security Council for information and so that there can be the necessary awareness by Council about this unpleasant turn of events between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which is in no way of Ethiopia's making and for which Eritrea would have to take full responsibility.

(Signed) Meles ZENAWI
Prime Minister

Enclosure

Statement of the Council of Ministers of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and all the peoples of our country have been making strenuous efforts to ensure the prevalence of a durable peace within Ethiopia and in the sub-region. To this end, we have not only striven to build peace within the country, but we have deployed ourselves to the same degree in making unrelenting efforts to develop relations with neighbouring countries, on the basis of respect for equality and sovereignty. In the conviction that the peoples of our region will be the beneficiaries of the development of neighbourly relations based on peace and mutual benefit, we have stood steadfastly for peace. Our stand in support of regional peace will continue to be maintained in the future.

The endeavours of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and all the peoples of our country to ensure peaceful relations with neighbouring countries are undertaken with the conviction that border claims can be resolved through peaceful means. On this basis, we, for our part, have been trying to resolve claims relating to some localities on our borders with Eritrea peacefully and through negotiation.

This being the fact, the Eritrean Government and the ruling Popular Front for Justice and Democracy have chosen to resolve the border issue by force reneging on the process of peaceful settlement of the matter. Consequently, they have, on 12 May 1998, entered Ethiopian territory which they have been claiming. They have clashed with police and local militia forces present to maintain the security of the area and are in control of some positions.

The Ethiopian Government vehemently condemns this move of the Eritrean Government and the Popular Front since it violates the sovereignty of Ethiopia and obstructs the ongoing efforts to resolve issues of claims in a peaceful manner. Furthermore, Ethiopia demands that the Eritrean Government unconditionally and immediately withdraw from Ethiopian territory and cease its provocative and belligerent activity. In the event that the Eritrean Government and the Popular Front do not desist from this dangerous action and withdraw from Ethiopian territory without any precondition, the Ethiopian Government will take all the necessary measures that the situation demands to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country.

Council of Ministers
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
13 May 1998